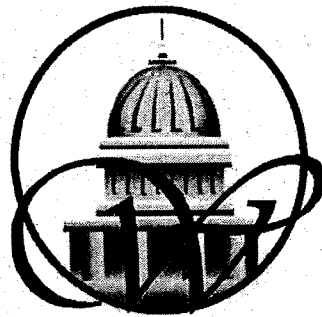


**Governor's Award
for
Best Practice 2001**

Award Nominees



**Presented October 12, 2001
at Washington State's
Workforce Leadership
Conference**

***Connecting the Dots for
Economic Vitality: Workforce
Strategies 2001***

Best Practice Recognition Awards
2001 Workforce Leadership Conference

Best Practice

Seamless Pathways™

Pierce County Careers Consortium

Lisa Edwards Pletcher, Consortium Director
Dr. Michele Johnson, Chair of Board and President of Pierce
College
Dr. Mick Moore, Vice-Chair of Board and Executive
Director
of Puget Sound ESD 121

The consortium, with leadership from a diverse group of business and community partners, is working to make the educational system in Pierce County more responsive to the needs of students and to employers. The consortium of school districts, community colleges, chambers of commerce, Economic Development Board, and the Tacoma-Pierce County Workforce Development Council, has been responsible for:

- Creating seamless projects and opportunities for students to move from high school to college and to the workplace.
- Establishing a dual credit program leading to elimination of redundant course work and quicker student transition to more challenging courses.
- Integrating industry skill standards into courses.
- Completing an agreement on a seamless pathway from high school courses to college to the Information Technology-Programming degree program at University of Washington-Tacoma.

- Implementing individualized planning programs for high school students that increased parental involvement has decreased dropout rates.

With new leadership in the past two years, the consortium has promoted apprenticeship programs, expanded work-based learning experiences for students, offered industry standard trainings, and awarded more than 9,600 college credits through the dual credit program.

Public/Private Partnership

Grays Harbor Employers' Assistance Project

LeRoy Tipton, President of the Grays Harbor Chamber of Commerce

Wayne Gale, Chair of the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council

Keith Chamberlain, Chair-Elect of the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council

Mike Kennedy, Executive Director of the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council

Sharon Tipton, Business Representative of the Employers' Assistance Project

The Grays Harbor Chamber of Commerce operates the Employers Assistance Project (EAP). It acts as an intermediary between business and public services, designed to meet the needs of businesses that need workers as well as serving individuals in the Welfare-to-Work program who need a job. The project helps unemployed individuals to gain and retain employment, and project staff maintains relationships with both the employer and the new worker after placement.

The project shattered the paradigm that workforce programs are the function of seasoned workforce professionals and dramatically demonstrated the effectiveness of a business

organization representing the workforce system. This project required strong private/public leadership in order for a business organization to cross agency boundaries. The EAP is located at the Grays Harbor WorkSource Center and is fully integrated into the workforce system. It is the vital link to the business community and has the full cooperation of all partners.

To date, more than 160 businesses are registered with the project, 234 individuals have been placed in full-time jobs, and their retention rate is 80 percent.

This project has received the Outstanding Rural Employment and Training Program award from the National Association of Workforce Boards in February, and it has been recognized by the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University as a One-Stop system innovation.

Vision

WorkSource Walla Walla Proficiency Testing Center

Jennie Weber, Director of WorkSource Walla Walla
Steve Moss, Executive Director of the Blue Mountain
Action Council

Steve Van Ausdle, President of Walla Walla Community
College

The Proficiency Testing Center was part of WorkSource Walla Walla's work to engage customers in defining service needs and exploring innovations to provide better customer service. The testing center was established after staff took the request from a large local employer for office skill proficiency testing and turned it into a program that other employers and job seekers could benefit from.

The center tests the proficiency of potential employment

candidates for a variety of office skill sets. It enables employers or job seekers to select combinations of testing criteria and to immediately see results. Individual results also may be documented to the job seeker's history for reference by staff serving the customer.

Promising Practice Award

Public/Private Partnership and Vision

WorkSource Walla Walla Mystery Shopper

Don Angotti, Chair, WorkSource Employer Committee,
Walla Walla

WorkSource Walla Walla's Employer Committee asked that mystery shoppers be used gather information on services being offered to the employer community. Mystery shoppers were selected to gather specific feedback on the services they received, how they were treated, and whether their needs were met.

Initial concern by WorkSource center staff about how the program would be used was turned into a process for staff to learn how to improve services. Once staff members saw opportunities to adjust and deliver services differently, they began to engage in brainstorming and problem solving. Results have been well accepted and the mystery shopper program has been expanded to begin looking at services provided to jobseekers.

Public/Private Partnership

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Services Council

Jody Smith, Director, Employee/Labor Relations &
Employment, MultiCare Health Systems
Debra Naubert, Vice President, Human Resources, Good
Samaritan Community Health Organization

Jim Walker, Vice President, Human Resources, Franciscan Health System

Cynthia Bush, Director of Occupational Health, Franciscan Health Systems

The Pierce County Health Services Council was born out of efforts in the summer of 2000 by the Tacoma-Pierce County Workforce Development Council and the county's major health service providers to address severe workforce shortages facing the county's health care sector. The council, along with representatives of the county's three largest health care providers, community and technical colleges, and others, began work on a plan to address the problem. In August 2001, the council completed a work plan with strategic goals that includes building awareness of health care career opportunities and providing efficient training to increase the pool of health care workers. To date, the council has established pathways to facilitate an individual's entry into health care and their movement up the career ladder, establishing career guidance for existing health care employees to help them manage their careers and prepare for economic change, and enhancing existing training at local community colleges.

Good Idea Award

Vision

Seattle-King County Out-of-School Youth Consortium

Pat Martinez, Coordinator , King County

The primary goal of the Out-of-School Youth Consortium is to provide individualized, comprehensive case management and support to youth to enable them to access and complete training, to secure and retain employment, and to progress toward self-sufficiency. The partners are working with secondary, postsecondary, and public and private sector

partners to blend funding and programming. This effort is designed to integrate services and systems to meet the needs of at-risk youth regardless of income, residency, or school enrollment status.

While much of the first year of the consortium was spent on getting systems in place rather than innovation, it met its goal to enroll 200 youth, providing service to 157. Of those leaving the program, 76 percent of younger youth obtained a high school diploma or GED and 72 percent of older youth were employed.

Best Practice Nominees

WorkSource Columbia Basin

The Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council has the only WorkSource facility in the state built without state funds. Original plans in 1997 called for developing a One-Stop facility on the Columbia Basin College campus, but after significant planning, the project was moved off campus. Goodwill Industries of the Columbia became a partner and was able to build and finance the facility with the help of a local businessman. The Employment Security Department became a participant after construction began.

The 30,000 square foot facility was opened in October 2000. It houses WorkSource Columbia Basin, the Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council, the Employment Security Department's District Tax Office, and the employment and training and corporate offices for Goodwill Industries of the Columbia. Seven organizations share costs. The center averages 300 to 500 visitors per day, with the monthly average of 13,350 during June, July, and August of 2001, exceeding projections made during planning.

WorkSource Walla Walla 5 Star Customer Program

WorkSource partners in collaboration with the local Employer Committee are finalizing a new service to improve

the readiness of job applicants for future employment. It will offer job seekers an array of resources and activities to help them better understand their employment options, articulate their knowledge, skills and abilities, and gain insight into the expectations of employers. The program will be accessible for job seekers through a variety of pathways and supported across all local service delivery sites.

A parallel effort was initiated to improve service to employers, enhance communications, and help employers better articulate their needs and expectations when listing job openings through the WorkSource system.

Key performance measures, customer feedback, and a linkage to local business planning efforts will be utilized to measure the impact and value of the program for WorkSource customers.

North Central At-Risk Youth Project

The Wenatchee School District and SkillSource, a non-profit organization and Workforce Investment Act grant recipient, formed a partnership to place dropouts and at-risk youth into a different educational setting to complete their high school education or equivalent. Registering students with both the SkillSource Downtown Learning Center and the Wenatchee School District allows state basic education funds and federal workforce funds to be used for classroom teaching, intensive work-based learning, and connecting activities.

Since 1995, \$800,000 in state education funds and \$2 million in federal training funds have financed structured work-based learning opportunities for students with local companies. During the 10-year span of this partnership, 500 former dropouts have participated and more than 200 have earned their high school equivalency certificate.

Seattle Jobs Initiative

The Seattle Jobs Initiative is an employment and training

program funded primarily by the City of Seattle and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The initiative partners with community-based organizations to recruit and assess job seekers; to provide case management services throughout training and job placement; and to provide a full year of retention support once job seekers secure employment. A new case management and retention system was developed to strengthen and improve services provided to jobseekers while promoting a high level of professionalism among case managers.

Since beginning operations in 1997, the Seattle Jobs Initiative has placed more than 2,355 people into jobs. The average wage at placement is \$9.59 per hour, with 37 percent of graduates reporting wage gains to an average of \$11.74 per hour. The six-month employment retention rate is 76 percent, and the 12-month retention rate is 58 percent. Three quarters of people placed into employment were people of color.

Snohomish Mentoring for At-Risk Youth

A partnership between Edmonds School District, the City of Mountlake Terrace, and the Alderwood and Lynnwood Rotary Clubs provides mentors for disadvantaged youth participating in the Student Adventures in Learning (SAIL) program. Mentors provide a job shadowing experience, take their youth to meals and Rotary meetings, and serve as a guide throughout the school year, helping with schoolwork and providing career advice. Mentors also organize community service activities, support field trips, provide and solicit incentives from business to mark achievement milestones, finance summer graduation, and provide scholarships for higher education.

The partnership enhances the mentoring relationship by actively engaging youth in service learning to develop an ethic of service and involvement in the life of the community. In the process, youth learn skills that enhance

their ability to produce culminating exhibits required for high school graduation.

Tacoma-Pierce County Transition Planning

A year into implementing the Workforce Investment Act caused the Tacoma-Pierce County Workforce Development Council to realize that its transition to its new role and responsibilities was incomplete. Council members participated in a facilitated retreat and a series of follow-up meetings to develop a blueprint of the optimum workforce development council and to establish an 18-month transition plan to manage change. The blueprint clarified the council's mission and vision, identified its customers, clarified its products and services, defined its function and the relationship between its committees, created a sense of team, and developed content for a council brochure.

Seattle-King County In-School Youth Consortium

The In-School Youth Consortium represents a shift from a stand-alone summer youth program to a coordinated 12-18 month program in which service providers and school faculty are in constant communication to meet the individual needs of participants. The program is designed to help youth progress towards graduation, build on skills and work experience from previous years so youth can get better jobs as they get older, and provide services, which help support work-oriented skills and interests. Leadership opportunities are available, including positions on an advisory board to help structure and improve the program. Youth can enter the program through any consortium partner.

Seattle-King County Community Response Team

The four-member Community Response Team's innovative approach takes the services of WorkSource and its community partners on the road to companies in the midst of layoffs. The team helps a company establish a

Reemployment Committee, with management, union representatives (when present) and affected workers identifying employee needs and available resources. Many needs are met by the response team through direct unemployment referrals, NAFTA and TAA petitions, dislocated worker service application sessions, and customized job-search workshops on topics such as resume writing, interviewing techniques, and cover letters.

From July 2000 to June 2001, the team served 65 downsizing companies and helped 7,264 dislocated workers enroll in a community or technical college, participate in publicly funded reemployment programs, or collect unemployment insurance.

Clark County Skills Center Professionalism Curriculum

The Professionalism curriculum at the Clark County Skills Center teaches high school juniors and seniors the processes of organizational learning while they train for occupation-specific skills. Skills Center staff and students foster an environment that enhances student sense of responsibility and organizational ownership. Students learn skills that increase their significance as an employee within an organization, including adapting to change, performing abstract work processes – making appropriate decisions, learning and using interpersonal skills, resolving problems and conflicts – working in teams and understanding system-wide needs. The curriculum helps young people understand that learning is a life-long process, change is inevitable, and communication and effective relationships are needed to move up job and career ladders throughout their lives. They learn to use skills and information to act on present and future career opportunities.

Cowlitz County Workforce Development Scenario Planning

Employers uncertain about workforce needs and training providers who can't respond quickly enough to employer

demands lead the Self-Sufficiency Work Group of the Pathways 2020 initiative in Cowlitz County to use Scenario Planning to help plan for its future workforce development needs. Community volunteers began interviewing individuals and meeting with focus groups in the summer of 2001 to seek insights and assumptions about the future of Cowlitz County. Information will be combined with statistical data to create three scenarios of Cowlitz County in the year 2010. Community leaders and business representatives will use the scenarios to develop a comprehensive and flexible community plan for education, training, and service programs for the county.